

Email to: economyjobsandfairwork@parliament.scot

13 November 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

WRITTEN EVIDENCE ON SCOTLAND'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE: TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2000 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 24,000. We:

- support policy development to improve approaches to planning for the benefit of the public;
- maintain the professional standards of our members;
- support our members, and therefore the majority of the planning workforce, to have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver planning effectively;
- maintain high standards of planning education;
- develop and promote new thinking, ideas and approaches which can improve planning;
- support our membership to work with others who have a role in developing places in Scotland; and
- improve the understanding of planning and the planning system to policy makers, politicians, practitioners and the general public.

RTPI Scotland welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence to the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee of the Scottish Parliament regarding Scotland's Economic Performance: trends, challenges and future developments. The ongoing review of Scotland's planning system, which will shortly see a Planning Bill introduced to the Scottish Parliament, is a timely opportunity to ensure that Scotland's economic strategy is spatially coherent and deliverable. That is, that it responds to the different environmental and economic and social realities of places across the country. *Delivering the value of planning*, research published by the RTPI in 2016, states that:

“Planning is critical to providing clarity and confidence for investments by markets so that they are able to deliver good development. Planning can improve the quality and quantity of land for development, ready land for construction (for example, by treating contaminated land), resolve ownership constraints (where there are many different owners), and bring forward investment by ensuring that the right infrastructure (such as transport and public amenities) are in place. In these and other ways, planning can lower the overall cost of new development, and open up opportunities for development.”

Our comments below outline some of the key mechanisms that the Scottish planning system already provides, and the ways in which we hope to see these improved by the Planning Bill, and the secondary legislation, policy and guidance that will accompany its implementation.

What role has Government support for innovation played in growing Scotland's economy and boosting productivity?

The City Region Deals in place across Scotland are a key part of the Government's economic strategy. RTPI Scotland has previously raised concerns that these agreements do not segue with spatial strategies already in place in the relevant areas. This lack of consistency is symptomatic of a wider problem, where the spatial considerations and implications of economic development are not taken account of sufficiently in advance of the implementation of economic strategies. This can result in a disjointed approach to physical development and investment in, for example, skills.

RTPI Scotland believes that many of the fundamentals are in place for ensuring that development and infrastructure supports economic growth in Scotland. However, through the planning review we have called for some changes to address the problem described above, and to ensure that spatial strategies at the national, regional and local scale are well integrated with other enterprise and skills strategies. In particular, we want to see the following:

- The National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy should be strengthened and merged to form a National Development Plan. The Plan should be informed by and in turn shape other national strategies, including:
 - National Transport Strategy
 - National Economic Strategy
 - National Energy Strategy
 - National Marine Plan
 - Land Use Strategy
 - Historic Environment Strategy
 - City Region Deals
 - Fairer Scotland Action Plan
 - National Waste Management Plan
 - Regional Transport Partnerships
- A strong replacement for Strategic Development Plans. The Scottish Government has confirmed its intention to remove Strategic Development Planning Authorities and the Strategic Development Plans that they are responsible for preparing. RTPI Scotland believes that it is critically important that these are replaced by a statutory duty for local authorities to agree outcomes for priority strategic issues in their areas. Local economic areas, travel to work areas and housing markets do not respect local political boundaries, and the planning system should provide for this, ensuring that local authorities are given the tools they need to agree solutions to contentious cross-border issues.
- A strong approach to strategic planning is particularly important for ensuring that all tiers of government and the Scottish Futures Trust are able to work together to deliver the infrastructure needed to support new housing development on the scale necessary in Scotland. As well as structures for strategic planning, this will involve establishing a strong relationship between spatial plans and infrastructure investment plans.
- A Chief Planning Officer post introduced in every local authority. This role would be about creating a statutory duty for the spatial implications of investment decisions to both inform and be taken into account by local authority corporate management teams. The

role needn't be an onerous requirement on local government; the duties could be placed on posts that already exist.

- A statutory link should be introduced between Community Planning and spatial planning. There should be increased emphasis on spatial planning acting on weaknesses identified in Local Outcome Improvement Plans and locality planning. Likewise, Community Planning should take greater account of development planning strategies and frameworks.

What are the main drivers of income and wealth inequality in Scotland?

We know that people who are less well-off are likely to be less satisfied by their environment: According to the Scottish Household Survey 2016 31% of adults living in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland rated their neighbourhood as a very good place to live in 2016, compared to 78% of those living in the 10 per cent least deprived areas. Likewise, a poor environment can impact on socio-economic opportunity. Problems such as worklessness, low incomes, lack of aspiration and ill-health are not just individual – they are also social. The environment can shape people's behaviour and limit or enhance their wellbeing and life chances. 'Place poverty' means that where people live affects people and their life chances. Inequality and poverty is a matter of income but also a matter of access to services, affordable housing or different transport options.

Scottish policy initiatives have had some success with place-based approaches to tackling and poverty and inequality, for example the success of the New Gorbals and wider Lauriston regeneration scheme in Glasgow. However, the outcome of the Scottish Household Survey shows us that much more is to be done. Planning is rooted in understanding the relationship between people and place, and therefore has an essential role in identifying and implementing place-based strategies for reducing inequality and improving opportunities for all. In 2016 the RTPi published [Place, Poverty and Inequality](#), which makes proposals for developing the place-based approaches to poverty and inequality that were implemented at the turn of the century throughout the UK, building on the lessons learned from those interventions.

I trust that you will find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss any aspect, or require clarification of any points raised, please contact me on 0131 229 9628 or by email to kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Houghton
Policy and Practice Officer